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What might GeoHumanities do? Possibilities, practices, publics, and politics

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Abstract

This article draws together seven practitioners and scholars from across the diffuse GeoHumanities community to reflect on the pasts and futures of the GeoHumanities. Far from trying to circle the intellectual wagons around orthodoxies of practice or intent, or to determine possibilities in advance, these contributions and the accompanying commentary seek to create connections across the diverse communities of knowledge and practice that constitute the GeoHumanities. Ahead of these six contributions a commentary situates these discussions within wider concerns with interdisciplinarity and identifies three common themes-possibilities practices, and publics-worthy of further discussion and reflection. The introduction concludes by identifying a fourth theme, politics, that coheres these three themes in productive and important ways.

Keywords

geohumanities, do, possibilities, practices, publics, might, politics

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What Might GeoHumanities Do? Possibilities, Practices, Publics, and Politics

Harriet Hawkins

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This article draws together seven practitioners and scholars from across the diffuse GeoHumanities community to reflect on the pasts and futures of the GeoHumanities. Far from trying to circle the intellectual wagons around orthodoxies of practice or intent, or to determine possibilities in advance, these contributions and the accompanying commentary seek to create connections across the diverse communities of knowledge and practice that constitute the GeoHumanities. Ahead of these seven contributions a commentary situates these discussions within wider concerns with interdisciplinarity and identifies three common themes—possibilities practices, and publics—worthy of further discussion and reflection. The introduction concludes by identifying a fourth theme, politics, that coheres these three themes in productive and important ways. **Key Words: interdisciplinarity, politics, practices, publics, transformation.**

An abracadabra word, *interdisciplinary* has been seen as conjuring magical potential but all too often affecting little actual change. As debates around the practices and possibilities of inter-, trans-, cross-, and multidisciplinary gather pace, what often seems to unite very disparate and often conflicting discussions is the recognition of such complex disciplinary relations as a pervasive mode of knowledge making for our times. We find them, for example, driving funding agency agendas; offering the *raison d'être* for journals, conferences, and research centers; and commonly cited as a panacea for the problems of our times. Although thinkers might be divided along semantic lines—as different understandings of inter-, trans-, and cross-disciplinarity slip past, overlap, and contradict one another—they seem to unite around one of two poles. *Advocates* subscribe to whatever flavor of disciplinary relations suits them with an enthusiastic delight—who would not want to be interdisciplinary? *Skeptics* question the emergence and wider import of such movements, often born from concerns with instrumentalism and social accountability in the context of the impact agenda,¹ and proffer scathing visions of the McDonaldisation (after Ritzer) of the research landscape as a terrain overpopulated with interdisciplinary research centers (Barry and Born 2013).

Once described as the “most seriously under-thought critical, pedagogic and institutional concept in the modern academy” (Liu 1989, 774) interdisciplinary research has recently become a pressing issue and an object of enquiry for researchers, funders, and government bodies alike. Seen as the panacea for so-called wicked problems—environmental change, for example—the potential for interdisciplinarity to respond to what seems like a collective awakening to the complex nature of contemporary global issues forms the backstop to many calls to revisit, reject,

or at least negotiate siloed disciplinarity. Perhaps nowhere have these discussions been felt more pertinent and at times more urgent than across the arts and humanities, where interdisciplinarity (although always common) is increasingly being formalized through, for example, the naming of fields such as environmental humanities, digital humanities, and medical humanities, as well as, of course, the GeoHumanities. Such territorializations, often situated as a response to worries over arts and humanities' futures and relevance, lend a certain coherence and often power to these ways of working. If nothing else, they form helpful "hooks" that contemporary research cultures and politics can rally around, promoting and celebrating such ways of working, if not always enabling their practical execution.

In the spirit of this journal's assembling of generous and invigorating communities of thought and practice, I have asked a series of scholars and practitioners to reflect on what the GeoHumanities means to them in terms of both its histories and legacies and its future potential. Far from seeking orthodoxies, narrating a hagiography, or defining possibilities in advance, this is an effort to open discussions across GeoHumanities' diverse constituencies, to explore how GeoHumanities have been and might be imagined, practiced, and worlded.

The six contributions that follow bring together scholars and practitioners working in different academic contexts around the world and with different intellectual affiliations; the participants are Lou Cabeen, Felicity Callard, Noel Castree, Stephen Daniels, Dydia DeLyser writing with Hugh Munro Neely, and Peta Mitchell. The contributors were asked to reflect on past interests, present challenges, and future possibilities for GeoHumanities through questions such as these: What new directions and future imperatives do you see for GeoHumanities scholarship? What opportunities and challenges might be presented? How might these trajectories link to past understandings of the GeoHumanities and traditions of scholarship and practice? What lessons do existing scholarship and practice offer (practically and intellectually)? What sorts of conceptual, methodological, and practice-based directions are going to be important in future years? What key ideas need to be borne in mind as GeoHumanities evolves? Their generous responses are presented in the pages that follow, offering lively and engaging comments through a range of different lenses; methodological, philosophical, and case study based. In several cases, autobiographical content also builds a picture of the kinds of political economies of the academy in which GeoHumanities is being encouraged and advocated for. This opening commentary goes on to draw out three key themes from these responses—possibilities, practices, and publics—before closing with a fourth, politics, that although informing all these contributions, remains perhaps underarticulated.

POSSIBILITIES: WHO WOULD NOT WANT TO DO THE GEOHUMANITIES?

"Transformative thinking ... creative interactions ... illuminating lost histories ... extending conversations ... choreographing new relations ... imagining and propelling us toward new futures."

This is a heady set of claims indeed, but this list captures just some of the work the commentators collected here suggest that the GeoHumanities might do. This is, of course, by no means an exhaustive list of the ways in which we practice and imagine the GeoHumanities, or how we conceive of the futures of thought and practice they propel us toward, but it is a provoking and promising start. Of course, as Felicity Callard reminds us in her exploration of a "queering" (after Sedgwick) of the GeoHumanities, we might gain inspiration from "a refusal

to determine in advance the work that the poetic, the theoretical, the performative, the archival, the synthetic and the keenly analytical might achieve.”

If that inspirational list provokes questions such as “Who would not want to do the GeoHumanities?,” then the commentaries offered here put flesh to these abstract bones as they talk through specific examples, or goals. Noel Castree, for example, offers a convincing plea for action, and the possibility for the GeoHumanities to not only fill the knowledge gaps of global change science, but to remake its DNA. The time is right, he argues, for the crafting of a more intimate relationship between GeoHumanities and the science of global environmental change. There are, he suggests, lessons we might learn from the environmental humanities as we work through what it is and how it is that GeoHumanities might intersect with scientists who work on these pressing issues of global concern.

It is not only knowledge that is transformed through the possibilities of the GeoHumanities, as many of our commentators discuss, but also our own subjectivities as researchers and practitioners. As Stephen Daniels offers, his experience of working with a public arts project led him to look again at his local landscapes, and in doing so shaped the ways he saw the world, as an academic and as a citizen. For Peta Mitchell, the GeoHumanities and its recent evolution entwines with key stages in her own evolving biography as a researcher and practitioner. As Callard’s account of collaborative interdisciplinarity suggests, to do such work is to become open to being made strange to oneself, as one’s perspectives and practices are put into question, generating something new in the process. Collaboration with other scholars and practitioners and with publics is common across these commentaries, and it is important not to underestimate the transformations such collaborations can bring to us as researchers and creative individuals.

What can also be transformed through the processes and practices of GeoHumanities are the performances and artefacts that are produced as a result of these projects: the translation of painstaking analysis and carefully executed synthesis into writing, but also into films, art works, and art walks. Lou Cabeen’s careful account of the evolution of her mappings work, *Aspirations Among Us*, details how different forms of geographical knowledge and practice come together with, in this case, historical information, religious ideas, and digital practices as well as the material and aesthetic practices of art making. As Cabeen’s and other project accounts make clear, to bring together people, knowledge, and practices from the substantive domains of geography and various arts and humanities disciplines is to form something new, something unexpected, and something tinged, at times, with a little enchantment.

PRACTICES

“Experimental ... unhomely ... impolite ... restless ... creative ... queer ... collaborative ... representational ... committed ... enchanted.”

The methods and practices of GeoHumanities are many and rich: Indeed GeoHumanities offers an expanded field of practices that encompasses not only the substantive domains that are shared, or the strains of critical theory we might unite (or go to war) around, but also an extension and exchange of the knowledge-making practices of our disciplines. As the contributions detail, GeoHumanities practices might be as much ethnographic methods, visual and textual analysis, or archival work as they are the shared work of exploration and mapping, or

the processes of weaving words or fibers into poems or fabrics, making marks on page, 120
photographic plate, canvas, or landscape. Many of these and more are brought to life in the
six contributions that follow. Mitchell's autobiographic notings of her own evolving place within
the GeoHumanities, for example, and its enabling and disabling characteristics, charts some
dimensions of this expansion, not least toward the digital humanities.

Two contributions, those by Cabeen and also by DeLyser and Neely, produced biographies of 125
the evolution of their GeoHumanities projects. In the first, the method and practices of the
GeoHumanities take intellectual and aesthetic form around the topic of maps and mapping. As
Cabeen recounts, the expertly produced terrain maps of state bodies form the basis for lay
mappings of spiritual engagements, which are brought together in an artistic mapping that
involves processes such as digital and relief printing and hand and machine stitching. In the 130
second, the methods and practices of GeoHumanities emerge as social-scholarly practices,
wherein collaborations proceed in fits and starts through a mixture of electronic and face-to-
face communication, and are informed by serendipity and dogged determination as much as by
scholarly endeavor. Eventually archival work is done, joined later by translation, as well as the
skilled practices of historians, geographers, heritage scholars, and enthusiasts. 135

Whether accounts by the one or the many, GeoHumanities practitioners often seem to come
together around knowledge produced by others. We can see this in Cabeen's drawing together of
lay knowledge and state maps, and the collaborations of Castree, Callard, and DeLyser and
Neely. In Daniels's discussion of the Siberechts painting, his own rich and multidisciplinary
practices—walking, textual, and visual analysis conducted both in specialist archival and artistic 140
spaces and his everyday life—form a lens through which to reflect on the painter's own “matrix
of intersecting perspectives, optics and forms of knowledge, including poetry and map making.”
These projects remind us that GeoHumanities is not a new endeavor, and that in our engage-
ments we often end up studying and responding to the GeoHumanities practices of past others.

As the preceding list suggests, however, to think about the expanded field of 145
GeoHumanities practices is not just to detail a growing technical field, but also to outline
a certain ethos of method and practice. Reading DeLyser and Neely's contribution we might
consider such an ethos to be informed by a sense of *crafting*. The term evokes not only the
commitment they note, but also a sense of acquired technique, of methods tried and tested,
of respected skills and hard-won embodied and material practices. The ethos of 150
GeoHumanities method and practices might also be considered to be one of experimentation
and creativity, words that have become almost ubiquitous in our contemporary vocabularies.
If these ideas have come to indicate a certain falling into line with a contemporary
intellectual climate, then their associations for our commentators here are rather different;
these creative practices are ones that seek to make strange, to bring to the fore the over- 155
looked, and to challenge the settled.

PUBLICS

Advocates of interdisciplinarity often point toward the potential of these practices to engage and
assemble stakeholders and publics around research issues. In the contributions here, publics of
and for GeoHumanities appear in manifold ways that open up those perhaps more stilted 160
accounts of existing public constituencies as end users of academic knowledge and practices.

Here, publics are not just informed and entertained by GeoHumanities work—although, of course, the importance of this should not be underestimated—but are brought into being by GeoHumanities work, and, moreover, themselves constitute parts of the evolution of GeoHumanities projects and practices. Looking across the contributions we see publics as collaborators, as knowledge producers, and as constituencies who incite the production of knowledge. It is clear that for many the GeoHumanities are deeply engaged with and shot through by practices and methods involving the public. 165

In what follows, this is most clearly evident in DeLyser and Neely's contribution. Here, as they make clear, a public GeoHumanities is full of possibilities, as their project proceeds through the assembly of a group of stakeholders but also comes to fruition in the form of a new resource for research and for public consumption. What their project biography evidences is the crafting of a public GeoHumanities, a social and material practice of collaboration and participation that involves both a temporal commitment on the part of the researcher and a commitment of many different interested parties to make this project happen. What is crafted in this project is not only the research process and the resultant film, but also the publics themselves, composing those stakeholders—museums, galleries, archives, translators, enthusiasts—that were part of the process, but also those that will watch the restored film. 170 175

That the publics we assemble and engage through our GeoHumanities research and practice might shape its contours, and define its directions and forms, also runs throughout the other contributions. For Callard, for example, writing of her research center Hubbub, public engagement can be enlivened by the kinds of collaborative creative endeavors that sit at the heart of the GeoHumanities. We might, therefore, extend Castree's plea for the GeoHumanities as a creative interface to include not only how such practices might address the need for making new knowledge and reshaping that practices by which we produce knowledge, but also how the gap between knowledge and action in the field of global environmental change might be closed. Indeed, recent work on art–science collaborations and practices, such as those detailed by Callard, demonstrate the potential of such practices to assemble new publics around environmental change issues. This is to both enchant publics through the aesthetics of processes of creative making, as well as to insert “lay” stories into the expert practices of climate science and environmental remediation, disrupting them as they do so. 180 185 190

POLITICS

Politics has, perhaps, been the unseen, unsaid thread that runs throughout the three preceding themes and the commentaries that follow. The politics we find here takes various forms, and although perhaps more space could and indeed should be made for a critical, radical kind of politics (here we might think of decolonizing, feminist, antiracist, or queer scholarship and practices), what is very present here is a form of knowledge politics that clearly does do work in the world. 195

As has been observed elsewhere, creative geographical practices have not always been as politically engaged as they might be (Marston and De Leeuw 2013), and there are lessons to be learned from others across the GeoHumanities community for whom scholarly and creative practices are always politically engaged, in the sense that they are given 200

force and purpose by an intervention within and a making of worlds. We might ask, then, what are the practices and spaces of politics proper to, but also propagating from, GeoHumanities? 205

The politics at work across these contributions and the projects they encompass takes aim at a politics of knowledge production. The reflections offered here bring into view GeoHumanities as a critical and productive assemblage of different disciplines and domains of expertise, all of which are kept in motion. Whether or not we term them unsettling, all inform ongoing investigations, representations, and reimaginings of disciplinary practices. This is, then, a politics that asks us to unsettle our knowledge hierarchies in multiple ways. The GeoHumanities conjured forth do not just require us to move beyond disciplinary silos; they also unsettle relations among theory, praxis, scholarship, practice, and application, and undo the privilege of academic expertise. 210 215

The tenor of this discussion is heady and the possibilities endless: As with creativity, the risk is that we romanticize the GeoHumanities, fall in love with the possibilities, and in doing so overlook the work that can be required to bring these forms of scholarship about, overlooking not least of all, the work often required to bring interdisciplinarity about in our institutions despite the rhetorics of university politics and research cultures. Alongside many of the contributors' positive discussions of such possibilities are also more tempered notes, gestures to hard work, misunderstandings, and missteps and to disciplinary oversights that make such possibilities hard to realize. Reference is made also to the structures and bureaucracies of research cultures and politics that might support such work with one hand, while with the other pulling away security and possibility as they fail to recognize the challenges of time and the making of the space needed for such work—the commitment and kismet DeLyser and Neely describe. 220 225

What, then, might GeoHumanities do, and what might it mean to do the GeoHumanities? Amidst the detailing, the collective bent of these responses is perhaps to gesture toward the radical possibilities for the GeoHumanities, radical because what is developed in the course of such work is not just new knowledge, but a set of reflections that take aim at the practices and processes of knowledge production themselves. Often this happens not only through reflection, but also through the very performance of these GeoHumanities practices. This is to acknowledge, but also to open up, possibilities for interventions and solutions that twine a reshaping of intellectual landscapes with a doing of work in the world. 230 235

APPARITIONS AMONG US: A GEOHUMANITIES PROJECT

Lou Cabeen, University of Washington

I am an artist who looks to geography and geographical thinking as a primary source for inspiration and insights into creative visual strategy. I respond to maps as systematic, visual documents, documents that use abstract 2D language to describe 3D experience. This is the most obvious of the shared epistemological assumptions of our two fields—that it is, in fact, possible to do this. It is remarkable that a display of abstract marks on a flat surface made by one person can be understood and experienced by another in such a way as to construct or reconstruct an understanding of physical experience. But whose experience is being constructed on a given 240



FIGURE 1 *Apparitions Among Us*, 2014, letterpress, digital and relief printing, hand and machine stitching, 12" × 9" closed, approximately 48" extended. (Color figure available online.)

map or artwork? What gets put onto that flat surface and what gets left out? The navigation of 245
these questions, well documented by other scholars and critics, is the space between public
knowledge and private experience. It is this space that I endeavor to manifest in my art.

Apparitions Among Us is an artist's book that details twenty-four apparitions of the Virgin Mary. These apparitions occurred in the continental United States during my lifetime (I was born in 1950). My startled discovery that there had, in fact, been such apparitions led initially to a series of large-scale drawings, and more recently to this book. *Apparitions Among Us* utilizes letterpress, digital, and relief printing to depict the locations of these apparitions; to name the city, town, or area in which they occurred; and to tell briefly the story of the apparition itself. The book exists as a collection of four accordion-folded folios, each folio hand bound using machine and hand stitching. The folios are titled "Rural Sightings" (Figures 1 and 2), "Public Display," "Receiving Instruction," and "Guadalupe Great and Small." The folios are housed in a gatefold box, and the book exists in an edition of five.

One side of the accordion-folded folios unfolds to reveal digitally printed portions of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographical maps overprinted with radiating circles of text. At the center of the circles is the site of an apparition, whose story can be found letterpress printed on the reverse of the accordion. The specificity possible with current online mapping and research

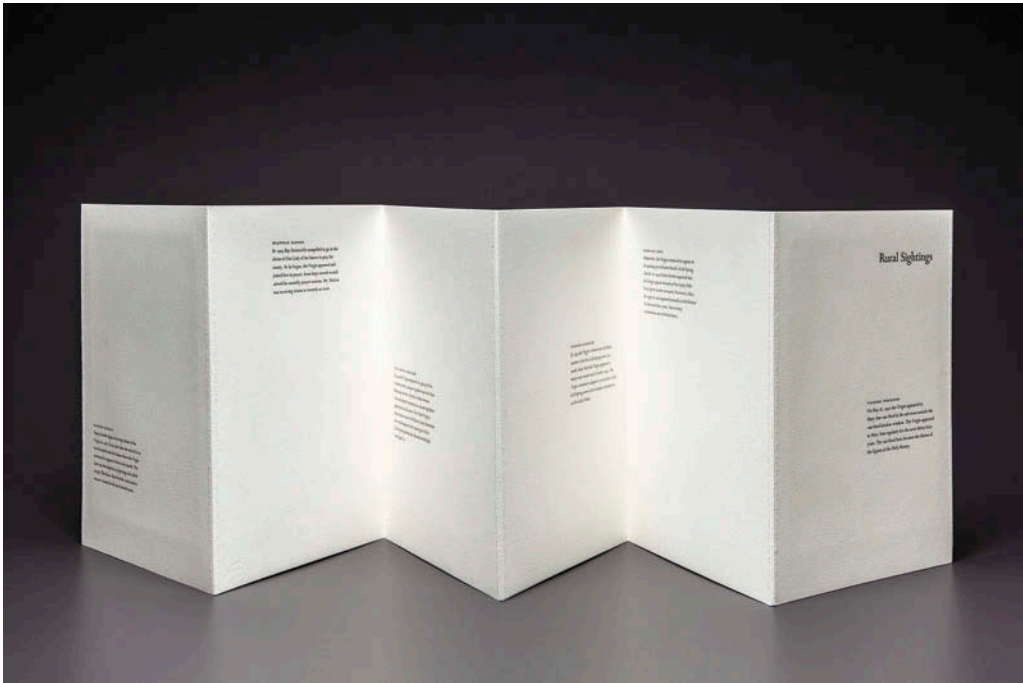


FIGURE 2 *Apparitions Among Us*, 2014, letterpress, digital and relief printing, hand and machine stitching, 12" × 9" closed, approximately 48" extended. (Color figure available online.)

technologies allowed me to pinpoint the exact locations of these events, which are often described by participants in apocryphal (i.e., less than objective) terms.

I exploit the USGS maps for their visual aesthetic, as well as for the assumption we bring to them of scientific, encyclopedic cartography—objective and categorical. My strategy was very simple—to juxtapose these beautiful but supposedly neutral documents of public space with evocations of the numinous and subjective. The USGS map conveys to the reader confidence in locating with precision the location in question. The additional information that surrounds and supports the topographical imagery, however, reveals that the place depicted and pointed to might not exist in a space approachable via public forms of knowledge and categorization.

The radiating circles of text are chants or prayers to the Virgin used by pilgrims at the apparition sites they demarcate. I have printed them in transparent gold. Although these reticulated circles can flash solid gold as the pages are turned, most of the time they remain transparent, with the specificities of the terrain showing through. Just so do subjective experiences of the numinous, of pilgrimage, of folkloric legend provide a gloss to the objective realities of topography and infrastructure. And just so does the public understanding of terrain become the lived experience of place.

EXPERIMENTATION ATHWART THE DISCIPLINES

Felicity Callard, Durham University and Hubbub (at The Hub at Wellcome Collection) 280

A new interdisciplinary terrain is being assembled through suturing the combining form “geo” to the abstraction “humanities.” How does that dense compound imagine the tying of the concerns of geography to those of the humanities? Rather than yoke what are envisaged as the distinct and proper objects of one domain (the geographical) to those of the other (the humanities), might, rather, the term GeoHumanities bear and propel into the future the memory of multiple, tangled strands and crossings that have long bound the interpretive labors of geographers to those of historians, literary scholars, and creative practitioners? Sedgwick, more than twenty years ago, famously conjured “queer” as a “continuing moment, movement, motive—recurrent, eddying, *troublant*,” whose etymology points to the verb torque, and to the adverb and preposition athwart (Sedgwick 1993, xii). Much of that early, powerful efflorescence of queer theory worked against the territorial demands of disciplines and the ordered temporalities through which they too frequently narrate their pasts and futures. Might the voraciousness with which queer theory approaches its potential sources, texts, and choice of methods—as well as its refusal to determine in advance the work that the poetic, the theoretical, the performative, the archival, the synthetic, and the keenly analytical might achieve—provide inspiration for those gathering around the compound GeoHumanities?

For a number of years, now, my own research interests have led me athwart those terrains imagined as proper to the social sciences, to the humanities and to the life sciences—whether in an effort to understand the nascent domain of neuropsychanalysis (Papoulias and Callard 2012), or to chart ways in which social scientists and humanities scholars might work with the concepts and models of neuroscientists in ways that avoid either rebarbative critique or ingenuous adulation (Papoulias and Callard 2010; Callard and Fitzgerald 2015; Fitzgerald and Callard 2015). The collaborations in which I have been involved have entwined geographical preoccupations and methods with those of cognitive neuroscience, sociology, cultural studies, psychology, and the visual and literary arts. Through them, my collaborator Des Fitzgerald and I have been increasingly interested in the different logics and practices of experimentation that are mobilized in the sciences, the creative arts, and, indeed, the social sciences. We have argued that experiments open up heterogeneous modes of investigation and practice through which to intervene in how the world is known, construed, represented, and assembled (Fitzgerald and Callard 2015). How might “we” (those of us who are gathering around the GeoHumanities) work—creatively, impolitely, queerly—with the logics through which experiments establish who or what is construed as the object of study and who the subject; whence evidence is assumed to emerge; which instruments prompt or capture that evidence; and the location at which the observer might stand? How might we entwine these kinds of experiments—whose histories lie predominantly in the sciences and social sciences—with the methods and representational strategies of the experimental novel, or experimental poetry? After all, both scientific and aesthetic practices of experimentation create new epistemic objects, and choreograph new relations between the things in the world and the media and technologies through which they are brought into visibility (cf. Roepstorff and Frith 2012; Waugh forthcoming).

Such problematics are currently playing out in the space of The Hub at Wellcome Collection, where, for two years, “Hubbub,” the large interdisciplinary project that I direct (and that involves

approximately fifty collaborators from the social sciences, the arts, the sciences, the humanities, broadcasting and public engagement), is exploring how different disciplines and domains of expertise investigate, represent, and reimagine the dynamics of rest, not least in relation to those states and phenomena—work, tumult, exertion, noise—to which rest is too easily opposed (Callard 2014; Callard, Fitzgerald, and Woods 2015). Here, we all, as collaborators working across the disciplines, are becoming strange both to ourselves and to one another. Some of the artists are mining and addressing historical archives, as well as creatively reworking psychological methods, in ways that transform hackneyed understandings of “source material” and data points. Some of us are harvesting modes of conceptualizing and eliciting states of daydreaming and mind-wandering from the humanities and the arts, to develop a new interdisciplinary protocol through which experimentally to investigate how the complex, patterned movements of focused and idle thought are related to the function of brain dynamics. Others are thinking through how the performance of exhaustion might transform usual ways in which it is conceptualized and measured as a physiological state of an individual, and individuated, body.

Rather than document or demand appropriate perimeters of and for future scholarship in the geohumanities, how might we, then, keep alive the strangeness of its contours, its modes of address, and the topoi that it might approach? In other words, might we cleave more to what might be unhomely about its methods and practices (whether of writing, drawing, sounding, visualizing, tracing, mapping) than strain toward their future domiciliation?

THE GEOHUMANITIES AND GLOBAL CHANGE SCIENCE: TOWARD POSITIVE INTERFERENCE

Noel Castree, University of Wollongong and University of Manchester

Global change science (GCS) needs the GeoHumanities, as part of a wider engagement with the environmental humanities. The problem is that many global change scientists do not yet appreciate the why and wherefore of the “need.” The good news, however, is that these scientists are currently receptive to voices on the “other side” of campus. In this commentary, I want to explain why the need arises and consider how the GeoHumanities might best speak to GCS.

GCS is a large, complex, multidisciplinary endeavor. It is devoted to describing, explaining, and predicting patterns of continuity and change within and between all components of the “Earth system” (namely, the biosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, cryosphere, and lithosphere). It is currently experiencing rapid evolution, evidenced—among other things—by the end of three of the four long-standing global research programs focussed on anthropogenic environmental change.² Future Earth replaces these programs (see <http://www.futureearth.org/>). Two notable features of it are (1) the centrality accorded to so-called human dimensions in its science plan, and (2) the centrality of “transformative knowledge” across its three research themes.³ They stand as both an invitation and an aspiration for anyone researching global environmental change. More broadly, a large number of global change scientists (and funding bodies) are calling for social scientists and humanities scholars to step forward. In the last few years, the pages of *Nature*, *Science*, *Nature Climate Change*, *Ambio*, *Current Opinion in Environment & Sustainability*, *Anthropocene Review*, *Earth’s Future*, and similar journals have been peppered with articles and editorials inciting those outside the environmental sciences to join the fray.

Likewise, when the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research issued the Belmont Challenge in 2009 (<http://igfager.org/belmont-challenge>), it explicitly referenced the social sciences and humanities as “missing ingredients.”

More than environmental social scientists, people in the environmental humanities have rarely been on the front line of global change research. This includes those who might describe themselves as geohumanists. That global change scientists are now looking to people like us therefore comes as a significant opportunity. It arises because the scale, scope, and magnitude of anthropogenic environmental change will be (already is) game-changing for life on Earth in all its forms. Understanding how, why, and to what ends people worldwide should respond is one crucial task the environmental humanities in general, and the GeoHumanities in particular, can perform. Relatedly, identifying the reasons why people in authority, as well as ordinary people, do not (yet) recognize the profundity of our planetary condition is a task for some humanists.

Yet few global change scientists seem to really understand what humanities scholars have to offer. Although I cannot evidence it in a short commentary, the calls referred to earlier are typically guilty of three things. First, they make more mention of the social sciences than the humanities. Second, when the humanities are mentioned, there is virtually no detail about what their contribution might be. Third, all too often the implication is that researchers from the various “people disciplines” will help to fill knowledge gaps about the current (and predicted future) realities of human dimensions. This implication, it seems to me, rests on the questionable ontological assumption that there is one world out there awaiting more complete analysis; the role of knowledge is then to represent reality as accurately as possible so that global change scientists can devise appropriate technical and behavioral measures in the realms of mitigation, adaptation, and precaution.

The environmental humanities have more to offer, and so, too, do the GeoHumanities. They inquire into the diverse ways that people—both past and present—invest the material world with meaning. They inquire into all human practices, from the conduct of science to periodic cultural rituals, from esoteric endeavors (like climate modeling) to everyday activities (like livestock farmers herding animals). They regard humans as beings who are biological and social, thinking and feeling, rule-following and creative, natural and historical, bounded and related, habitual and flexible, rational and passionate, consistent and fickle, and cooperative and antagonistic. They seek to record, and often evaluate, the assumptions, feelings, articulated beliefs, and expressed emotions that people draw on to make their own lives, and those of others, matter. As part of this they pose the timeless questions of what it is to be a human, and what our humanity entails cognitively, morally, aesthetically, and practically. This implies that humanists not only investigate values, politics, cultural variety, power, identity, affect, and so on: The knowledge they produce is itself implicated in those things, even when produced with all the integrity we associate with the idea of “good research.”

Consequently, the environmental humanities and the GeoHumanities have the potential to remake the DNA of GCS. By refusing the invitation to fill knowledge gaps downstream of GCS—as if “facts” and “values” can be analyzed separately by different groups of experts—they can help it realize its potential to inspire serious debate about the future of humanity in the Anthropocene. This aligns the environmental humanities and the GeoHumanities with the values of “real democracy” and less with the (undoubtedly important) values of environmental management and decision making. It positions them as vital components of the transformative thinking that many outside Future Earth, never mind within, are calling for. There are many legitimate

pathways toward transformation, not least because the destination is itself a legitimate subject of debate. If research fails to open up key questions of means and ends, then it is likely that transformation will merely be rhetoric used by those unwilling to transform anything. 410

However, we cannot just point fingers and hope that global change scientists will change their *modus operandi* in our favor. We also have to seriously consider altering our own practices. As organizations like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the new Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services attest, GCS enjoys high-level visibility in politics, commerce, and the public sphere. Most contemporary humanities scholars are not accustomed to translating their research through such high-stakes boundary organizations. Their words do not enjoy the prominence of a Papal encyclical. Engaging directly with GCS could be globally consequential because of the field's visibility and potential societal influence. To date, many environmental humanists have rested content with an arm's-length relationship. For instance, many have explored the moral implications of the evidence and forecasts provided by the science teams promoting ideas like "planetary boundaries" and global "tipping points." Meanwhile, others have taken a more critical stance, exposing the role GCS is playing in solidifying particular regimes of "governmentality." The common factor in both responses is distance from global change researchers. The latter are treated as objects whose words and deeds are to be scrutinized, but not as subjects who might want to read and think about what's being written and said about them (Castree 2014). 415 420 425

Two things give me hope that this can change. First, in parts of GCS there is a real appetite for change. Some thought leaders responsible for steering GCS strategically clearly oppose a "business as usual" approach (see Hackmann Moser, and St. Clair. 2014). Second, and more locally, the launch of this journal comes at a really interesting time in the history of academic geography. Three elements of context are especially salient to the future character and fortunes of the GeoHumanities. One is the sheer diversity of society–environment research in geography. In philosophical, topical, methodological, and normative terms, this research is more heterodox than any other discipline. A second element is the recent attempt to revisit the relationships between human and physical geography in unorthodox ways at the levels of both principle (e.g., Lave et al. 2014) and practice (e.g., Lane et al. 2011). The final element is the number and range of existing connections between geographers and the wider world of GCS (albeit few geographers with a strong GeoHumanities profile). My hope is that these three things set the scene for new engagements between geohumanists and global change researchers, ones that might inspire others in the wider environmental humanities to follow suit. 430 435 440

LOOKING AT THE OVERLOOKED

Stephen Daniels, University of Nottingham

Writing in the summer of 2015, I have framed my reflections on the foundations and future directions of *GeoHumanities* in terms of a landscape project to which I am currently contributing. "Nottingham from the East" is organized by Ordinary Culture, who undertake projects on art, culture, and heritage in public settings where such works have not been investigated before, particularly ones that illuminate lost histories and imagine alternative futures (see <http://www.ordinaryculture.org.uk>). This project focused on a place on the eastern edge of Nottingham, 445



FIGURE 3 Jan Siberechts (1690) *Nottingham from the East*. Courtesy of Nottingham City Museums and Galleries. (Color figure available online.)

Colwick Woods. The project took its title from a painting in the city art collection, *Nottingham from the East*, a prospect of the city produced around 1690, by Jan Siberechts (Figure 3). Sited 450 on a steep scarp, Colwick Woods is the vantage point of this painting.

This landscape was overlooked in more ways than one. Publically owned, and valued as a green space by the local community, Colwick Woods is little known as a historical geographical landscape, one with wide-ranging cultural and social significance, and some spectacular views of the city and its region. In part this is because it is located on the poorer east side of the city, and 455 not well documented. Dwelling for many years in Nottingham, living on the south side, and working on the west side, I had never visited Colwick Woods. The place forms a major landmark in views from Nottingham, faced me on my way to work, and, as I discovered, was laid out as a landscape park, an academic specialism of mine. I knew the picture but not the place. Somehow I had scarcely noticed Colwick Woods: It was there, but not there, hidden in 460 plain sight. My partial sightedness prompted me to learn about this landscape, as a citizen, as well as a geographer, and explain this on a field walk. It proved to be a transformative experience. Colwick Woods now makes an impression on me wherever I am, the project has reoriented my view of Nottingham, literally so, shifting to the east. The look of such landscapes, when we attend to them, shapes the way we see the world. 465

The historical geography of Colwick Woods offers some clues as to why it has been overlooked. For most of its history it was part of a great estate that stretched to the north and south and was broken up to sell land for urban and industrial development. What is now called Colwick Woods was the deer park, later landscape park, for a country house (now a hotel) from which it is cut off by the railway. As Nottingham expanded in the nineteenth century, the 470 citizenry took it upon themselves to make excursions to the east. The estate was jealously guarded against poachers, perhaps a reason why a crowd inflamed by the House of Lords

rejection of the Reform Bill in 1831 to extend the franchise, sought to destroy Colwick Hall, to
raze it to the ground. The landscape history we have been able to tell, with old maps and
surveys, as well as observation on the ground, reveals a more open landscape than is visible
now, of groves and pasture, vistas and panoramas, which had become choked by tree growth.
Some of this cover has been cleared to reveal the viewpoint of the Siberechts painting, in the
process helping to prevent building development that would have both obscured the view and
closed down its connections to a wider world. 475

The culture of landscape in the Siberechts picture is about more than a single view; rather it is
about a matrix of intersecting perspectives, optics, and forms of knowledge, including poetry
and map making, which reveal a geography of movement and process, of navigation, farming,
and building development. This is not a faithful reproduction, but an idealized imitation. As a
prospect, it is a vision of time as well as space, a view into the future, a composite created by
displaying features that are imagined as well as observed, and seen with a precision that could
never be discerned by the naked eye. Its very insistence as an image invites us to explore the
complex, contested world it represents. Although the content and political structure of the view
has changed substantially, from an aristocratic world to a more democratic one, the picture still
offers a prospectus for understanding the landscape now. If every picture tells a story, this picture
is a model for place narrative itself. 480 485 490

Revealing hidden cultural and natural processes and structures, through the intersection of
landscapes in art and landscapes on the ground, we can come to clearer critical understanding of
where we live now, and how, and for whom, we might want to manage future development. The
Nottingham from the East project has used some time-honored methods of observation, narra-
tive, map interpretation, picturing, archival searching, scholarly reflection, gallery talking, and
field walking, practices that distinguished the Association of American Geographers (AAG)
volume I coedited, *Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities*.
Such methods, representational, multidisciplinary, collaborative, accessible, and often conversa-
tional, offer a platform for publically engaged explorations of real and imagined geographies,
looking at the overlooked locally and following its implications farther afield. I trust they form
part of the groundwork of this journal and its future prospects and pathways. 495 500

COLLABORATION, COMMITMENT, AND KISMET: CRAFTING A PUBLIC AND PARTICIPATORY GEOHUMANITIES

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Hugh Munro Neely, Institute for Film Education

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In this short essay we advocate for a public and participatory GeoHumanities, offering three
guiding principles forwarding that aim, collaboration, commitment, and kismet:⁴ collaboration in
webs of scholars, practitioners, enthusiasts, and community members; commitment over years or
decades; and kismet, the very enchantment on which our efforts depend. We show how all three
shape public and participatory GeoHumanities through the story of a silent film long thought lost
but recently rediscovered in a single surviving print. 510

The story begins in 1884 when Helen Hunt Jackson published *Ramona*, a social-protest
novel and period romance set in Southern California, aimed at positively transforming the

lives of American Indians. A smashing success, it appeared on the eve of a tourist boom—soon visitors to California read *Ramona* preparing for their visits, and then toured sites therein described. The novel, remaining strongly in the landscape and popular imagination for 130 years, has seen two stage adaptations, an outdoor pageant, five film versions, and a Mexican telenovela—each one grand in scale, its own effort to reinterpret and engage the story anew.⁵

The third film version, released by United Artists in 1928 (see Figure 4)—the height of the silent-film era—was epic: Directed by a Native American (Edwin Carewe), it starred a Mexican woman (the mesmerizing Dolores Del Rio) as Ramona. Its success saw thousands of prints distributed in the United States and also around the world: Because of the ease of translating dialog titles, silent films enjoyed wide distribution in foreign-language markets. But by 1929, the film, along with all silents, had been eclipsed almost everywhere by the arrival of sound. *Ramona*, like hundreds of other films, vanished.

In the late twentieth century when GeoHumanities researchers took renewed interest in the novel and its adaptations, this lost film had to be left from our analyses. Today that is no longer



FIGURE 4 Promotional poster for the 1928 *Ramona* released at the height of the silent era when charismatic star Dolores Del Rio was at the peak of her career. (Color figure available online.)

the case: A restored print is now available, and will be released on DVD, returned to the broader public for which it was intended. What made this possible is a confluence of collaboration, commitment, and kismet. 530

The story resumes in Eastern Europe, where prints of American silent films with foreign-language titles were often left in theater basements and film-exchange offices, saving the cost of shipping a supposedly used-up title back to its source. In Prague, one print of *Ramona* survived unnoticed. Then, during World War II, when Nazis occupied Czech territory and confiscated vast quantities of private property, many film prints were looted and integrated into the Reichsfilmarchiv. *Ramona* was dragged along. 535

At the war's end, when the Russians liberated Berlin, they liberated the Nazi film archive as well, merging its contents into the gigantic Soviet film archive, Gosfilmofond. *Ramona* disappeared among the masses. 540

Then, in the 1960s, a Czech film archivist discovered this American silent with Czech, not Russian, dialogue titles. *Ramona* was extradited, integrated into the Czechoslovak film archive, and listed by the International Association of Film Archives as the world's only copy. But after the Velvet Revolution the film dropped from the listings—*Ramona* again fell silent, presumed to have decomposed. 545

By the early twenty-first century, three researchers, the first in English and film studies, the others a silent-film historian-practitioner and a geographer, put up a persistent search based on a rumor that that one print had survived, unlisted, in that Czech archive. Indefatigable inquiries persuaded the archivists to excavate the print; in two trips in 2010 the scholars traveled to Prague to view it: The world's only print of the 1928 *Ramona* was screened—on an ordinary projector. 550

The film, however, was made not for research but for public viewing, and the group was determined the film be restored and rereleased. Perseverance engaged the U.S. Library of Congress, and after protracted parleys, in late 2011 *Ramona* was couriered back to the United States. There, Library of Congress staff copied the print and restored the copy, creating a print for public access from the new negative. 555

When exhaustive research could not turn up a complete original English-language script, a *Ramona* expert and a Czech translator joined the effort, and a new script was authored based on the Czech titles. The granddaughter of the film's director joined the team, and they commissioned a silent-film orchestra to compose a score. Finally, in 2014, eighty-six years and one day after *Ramona*'s premiere, the restored print debuted in Los Angeles (Figure 5). Today, it has been publically screened in more than a dozen venues. Further, grant funding has assured the film's upcoming release on DVD. 560

So today, thanks to these efforts, the stunning 1928 silent film version of *Ramona* has been returned to the public stage it was made for—an achievement of public and participatory GeoHumanities that transcends typical scholarly outputs. The story demonstrates the collaboration that might be required of public GeoHumanities—joining scholars, practitioners, enthusiasts, and community members.⁶ The drawn-out process testifies to the commitment public GeoHumanities could impose—just the film's excavation, return, restoration, and rerelease demanded six years of devotion. This single print's survival speaks to kismet—the enchanted twists of fortune on which our efforts in public GeoHumanities must ultimately rely. 565 570



FIGURE 5 Ramona (Dolores Del Rio) in romantic embrace with Alessandro (Warner Baxter) in 1928. In 2014 the newly restored version of this long-thought-lost silent film premiered in Los Angeles—through collaboration, commitment, and kismet, *Ramona* was returned to the public stage for which it was intended. (Color figure available online.)

WHAT'S IN A NAME? GEOHUMANITIES AND THE FORMATION OF A NEW (INTER) DISCIPLINE

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Just over eight years ago, in mid-2007, I packed my bags for a northern hemisphere summer and took what turned out to be an auspicious trip from Brisbane, Australia, to Charlottesville, Virginia, to take part in the AAG Geography and the Humanities Symposium—the first in a series of AAG-sponsored events and publications that would eventually lead to the formation of the *GeoHumanities* journal. At the time, I was a relatively new academic in a hybrid humanities-based school with an unwieldy acronym that struggled to accommodate its constitutive disciplines of cultural, literary, and film and media studies, as well as art history,

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drama, linguistics, and writing. I was now part of the school's faculty, but I had also done my research training in it, and so in many ways the interdisciplinary nature of my research—which brought questions of space and geography to bear on cultural, media, and literary studies—was testament to the broad range of disciplines and disciplinary expertise I had been exposed to as a student within it. 585

I have little doubt that my interdisciplinarity played a role in my almost seamless transition from PhD student to full-time faculty member at a time when the adjunctification of higher education was beginning in earnest. As an academic, however, I was soon to discover the limits to interdisciplinarity, as the difficulty of situating my research in a given discipline within the school (leaving aside my forays into geography) became increasingly problematic in a national research environment moving inexorably toward top-down assessment based on rigidly defined field-of-research classifications that effectively militate against interdisciplinary research.⁷ In Virginia in 2007, three years before Australia's first national research assessment exercise, I was as yet blissfully (possibly naively) unaware of how bureaucratically challenging my interdisciplinarity would soon become—I was revelling in the opportunity to engage with like-minded academics and artists working at the intersection between geography and the humanities. 590 595

By the time the two book collections inspired by the symposium appeared in 2011, “geography and the humanities” had been portmanteaued to create the more pithy label of GeoHumanities—a term that the editors of the *GeoHumanities* collection were at pains to point out was not intended to “define a comprehensive new ‘field’ or ‘discipline,’” but rather to denote the “rapidly growing zone of creative interaction between geography and the humanities” (Richardson et al. 2011, 3–4). As Cresswell (201) also noted, the GeoHumanities are nothing new, and could be considered simply the latest “instantiation of humanistic thought that has had spatial thinking at its heart” for some two millennia. Despite this long prehistory, the almost concurrent emergence in the late 2000s of a constellation of terms—namely, geohumanities, spatial humanities, and geocriticism—that emphasize the intersections between geography and the humanities seems to suggest either a new arc to the spatial turn noted by Soja and Jameson in the late 1980s and early 1990s, or a drive toward naming and delineating an existing interdiscipline—or both. 600 605 610

Certainly the digital spatial turn occasioned by the growth of ubiquitous locative media, and the opening up of geospatial technologies to nonspecialists via neogeography in the mid-2000s cannot be overlooked in the coemergence of these terms. Indeed, my own research trajectory has broadly followed this arc from the not-so-digital to the digital GeoHumanities: from a focus on spatial and cartographic metaphors in literary and theoretical texts, to digital humanities geovisualization, and most recently to analyzing and mapping “big” geosocial media data in a digital media research center. This is not, however, to say that GeoHumanities is or should become a byword for the digital GeoHumanities in the way that the term spatial humanities denotes, in effect, the digital spatial humanities.⁸ Although a broadly conceived GeoHumanities must take account of and engage with these spatiotechnological emergences and affordances, as Cresswell and Crang have cautioned, it must take care not be subsumed within a digital media/digital humanities/big data agenda that, when approached uncritically or superficially, could lead to a “restricted spatiality” that renders space inert (Crang 2015). 615 620 625

Since the publication of the *GeoHumanities* collection in 2011, I have used the term GeoHumanities, somewhat against the editors' intentions, precisely as a way of marking out the interdisciplinary terrain my research has occupied. What it provided, in the face of a rigid and arbitrary classification system, was the ability to construct a research narrative around a nascent but lively and growing—and *named*—interdiscipline that was at once largely self-explanatory and expansive enough to accommodate a broad range of methods, approaches, media, and technologies put to service for a common aim: to explore the relationships among space, geography, and the humanities. The establishment of the *GeoHumanities* journal, carrying as it does the AAG's imprimatur, will, I hope, only serve to strengthen and advance the interdisciplinary, promoting research and artistic endeavor that represents a critical and creative engagement with the concept of the GeoHumanities across a broad media base, encouraging collaboration between geographers and humanities-based researchers, and fostering a sense of academic community and identity around the term. The establishment and naming of a journal, particularly by a major professional organization, has been (and continues to be) in the modern university research environment a key stage in the formation of a discipline, which, as Chandler (2009) put it, requires both "some sort of institutional framework," including a "home base and a sense of its identity over time," or, in other words, "a local habitation and a name" (734–35). Like the editors of the *GeoHumanities* collection, I am not fully convinced of the merits or likelihood of the GeoHumanities attaining full disciplinary status in its own right, but I greatly look forward to seeing the interdiscipline taking shape (but, then again, perhaps not too much) through this journal.

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NOTES

1. The impact agenda in the U.K. research context is driven by the impact criterion introduced by the Higher Education Funding Council into the Research Excellence Framework. Impact here is broadly defined as a research contribution to the U.K. economy, society, and culture.
2. The programs are the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program, launched in 1987, which followed the World Climate Research Program (WCRP), created in 1980. They were succeeded by the International Human Dimensions Program (1990, relaunched in 1996) and Diversitas (launched in 1991 and focusing on global biodiversity and biogeography). An attempt to coordinate these has occurred under the Earth System Science Partnership for well over a decade from 2001. All but the WCRP are now being folded into Future Earth (2014–2024).
3. The themes are Dynamic Planet (which is and will be dominated by science-led projects), Global Sustainable Development, and Transformations Toward Sustainability. All three are referenced to the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, due to be ratified later in 2015.

4. One of us (DeLyser) has previously advocated for participatory and public historical geography, efforts closely related to public and participatory GeoHumanities. See DeLyser (2014). DeLyser presented an earlier version of this paper at the International Conference of Historical Geographers in London, July 2015. 665
5. See DeLyser (2005).
6. The collaborative cast here includes the following: five film archives and their archivists (Národní Filmov'ý Archiv [Myrtil Frida in the 1960s and in the twenty-first century Michal Bregant, Vladimír Opěla, Věroslav Hába, and Karel Zima], the Reichsfilmarchiv, Gosfilmofond, the Library of Congress [Mike Mashon, Rob Stone, and Lynanne Schweighofer], and the UCLA Film and Television Archive [including Jan Chistopher Horak, Shannon Kelley, Paul Malcolm, and Kelly Gramml]); a film curator who never lost hope that the film was in Prague (Charles Silver of MOMA); two academics, Joanna Hearne (English and Film Studies) and Dydia DeLyser (Geography); a local historian (Phil Brigandi); a silent-film historian (Hugh Munro Neely); a Czech translator (Klara Molacek); a granddaughter of the film's director (Diane Allen); grant funding (from the Allen Family Foundation, and the Anders Family Foundation); and the Mont Alto Silent Film Orchestra (composer Rodney Sauer). 670
7. In Australia, research is classified and assessed according to field of research (FoR) codes laid down by the Bureau of Statistics and last revised in 2008. In an article on the "paradox of interdisciplinarity" in the Australian research context, Woelert and Millar (2013) pointed out the "significant mismatch between the pervasive discourse of interdisciplinarity" in the rhetoric surrounding national research governance and "current, relatively inflexible governmental research funding and evaluation practices on the other," particularly as they are embodied in and instrumentalized through the rigid FoR coding system (756). 675
8. Referring as it does specifically to the uptake and use of GIS technologies and geovisualization within humanities disciplines, the term *spatial humanities* is entirely predicated on—but elides in its name—the digital (see Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris 2010). The 2013 creation of a GeoHumanities special interest group (www.geohumanities.org) within the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) could be seen as part of a similar, self-effacing move to reduce the GeoHumanities to the digital. 680
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